



Sharing Knowledge, Strengthening Connections, Improving Outcomes

PRESS RELEASE

Effective Faith-Based Organizations Win Awards for Community Service Collaborations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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20 June 2005

Charlottesville, VA

The Faith and Service Technical Education Network (FASTEN) today announced the ten state winners of its 2004-2005 “*Partners in Transformation*” Awards Program. The competition seeks to identify leading models of faith-based, cross-sector collaborations in meeting community needs. 470 faith-based organizations applied to the contest, which was co-sponsored by FASTEN and the Points of Light Foundation. Winners receive a \$5,000 award recognizing their achievement.

Applicants to the contest reported on their both their program outcomes and the nature of their cooperation with partners outside the faith community (e.g., public schools, police departments, local government agencies, secular nonprofits). Judges examined applicants for evidence of positive tangible results, effective and creative programs, and robust, meaningful partnerships with secular agencies. The winning organizations were engaged in providing a variety of community services, from a rural health clinic in Oklahoma to an ex-offender reentry program in Arkansas and a community garden for immigrants in Idaho.

“Innovative faith-based organizations around the country are solving real problems – helping the unemployed find work, keeping kids off of drugs, providing health care to the uninsured, tutoring kids to improve their grades – and are often doing so in creative partnerships with groups outside the faith community,” said FASTEN’s Amy Sherman. “We think their stories are valuable and we wanted to find these groups and reward them for what they are doing.”

In its inaugural year, the Partners in Transformation contest was piloted in ten states: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Idaho, Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Texas. Faith-based non-profit organizations or houses of worship that address social problems in these states and that have an annual budget of less than \$5 million were eligible to enter.

Sponsored by the Pew Charitable Trusts, FASTEN is a multi-partner initiative aimed at building capacity among faith-based social service organizations. The “Partners in Transformation” Awards Program was directed by the Sagamore Institute for Public Policy’s Faith in Communities office.

A listing of the ten state winners, complete with short descriptions, follows:

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2004-2005 FASTEN Partners in Transformation Contest State Winners

Alaska

Covenant House Alaska "The Crisis Center" (Anchorage)

This emergency shelter for homeless youth 13-20 years old represents a collaboration of local businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. The Crisis Center provides case management in such areas as family mediation, substance abuse, health care, employment assistance, and educational assistance. In the past year, Covenant has served 588 youth. Of those, 77 had dropped out of high school. Covenant helped 38% of them prepare for and pass the GED test. Covenant also helped 101 youth runaways successfully return home and reintegrate with their families. Covenant House's partners include Alaska's Office of Children Services, the Anchorage Police Department, and the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Alabama

Southwood Presbyterian Church "Lincoln Village Ministries" (Huntsville)

Partnering with community groups, congregations, non-profit organizations and businesses, this ministry seeks to uplift and revitalize the low-income Lincoln Village community and provide the residents with support and hope. Through their vibrant partnership with Lincoln Elementary School (where 94 percent of students qualify for free/reduced lunch), the ministry provides tutors for over half of the enrolled children. Among these participants, writing assessment scores have increased from 11% to 48%. Numerous children are also involved in extracurricular activities such as dance and art, made possible through the ministry's community partners. The ministry supports the school also by providing chaperones for school field trips and party foods for special events. This FBO also emphasizes support for parents, accompanying them to student-teacher meetings and providing emergency food and clothing through a neighborhood center. PTA involvement at the school has risen from six parents to over 100.

Arkansas

Second Genesis, Inc. "Second Genesis, Inc." (Little Rock)

This organization provides life skills training and transitional housing for up to two years for formerly incarcerated women; 96% of participants obtain and maintain full time employment and 90% of participants obtain stable housing upon exiting the program. In 2004, Second Genesis served 38 women and 50 children at the modest cost of \$3900 per family. This FBO partners with the AR Department of Corrections, the probation/parole board, HUD and other local agencies so that in addition to the services Second Genesis offers (e.g., mentoring, job training, parenting classes) participants can also receive gifts in kind, substance abuse counseling, and financial aid.



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Florida

South Florida Urban Ministries "South Florida Urban Ministries of the United Methodist Church" (Miami)

This program provides assistance to migrant workers and their families through literacy training and GED preparation for the parents; tutoring and after/out of school care for the kids; and family enrichment activities for all participants. The program is meant to improve the quality of life for the whole family. South Florida Urban Ministries served approximately 200 participants in the past twelve months on a modest annual budget of \$60,000. Over thirty volunteers are active in the program monthly. Last year, not a single program participant dropped out of school and 60 percent of the migrant parents were involved in either a literacy, GED, or family enrichment program.

Idaho

Congregation Ahavath Beth Israel "Congregation Ahavath Beth Israel Community Garden" (Boise)

This congregation provides refugees with a plot to grow an edible garden; over the past year they have served 19 families and helped them achieve the cultivation of high quality organic food, opportunities for socialization, language acquisition, and community building. Through their associated ESL program, the congregation reached a total of 134 refugees last year at a cost of under \$8000. Agencies working directly with the refugees involved with the Community Garden report that the participants' social skills, language skills, and time management skills have improved.

Michigan

Good Samaritan Ministries "The Community Housing Partnership Transitional Housing Program" (Holland)

The Community Housing Program (CHP) provides transitional housing and support for homeless families for up to 2 years and includes case management, life skills classes, home maintenance, financial education, affordable rental housing, job training, mental health and substance abuse counseling referrals, mentoring and personal support, and, for some participants, Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). In the past year, CHP served 145 individuals at a cost of only \$3034 per person. CHP partners primarily with a secular nonprofit called Community Action House. In the past year, 80% of departing families moved into their own housing, and 20% were able to purchase their own home.

New Jersey

Elijah's Promise Soup Kitchen "Promise Jobs Culinary School" (New Brunswick)

This organization feeds the hungry and prepares low-income adults for careers in the food service industry. The Promise Jobs Culinary School provides job readiness skills, job training, job placement assistance, mentoring and aftercare services; 45 individuals were served in the past 12 months. This FBO partners with the local Adult High School and Rutgers University to make possible the endeavor. 97% of graduates are placed in restaurant jobs earning \$8-12 per hour. Perhaps even more impressively, the program participants' job retention rate after six months is 95%.



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Ohio

Central Ohio Youth for Christ "City Lights JV" (Columbus)

This 13-year-old program serves high-risk students at Starling Middle School through mentoring, tutoring, life skills and in- and out-of-school programs, leading to significant reductions in youth crime and school drop-out. Last year, 150 students participated in the City Lights JV program. Ninety-three percent of participants remained in school or took on full time employment and fully 95 percent did not get in trouble with the juvenile justice system. Impressively, the ministry has achieved these results at the modest budget of \$160 per student.

Oklahoma

Good Shepherd Health Clinic of Muskogee, Inc. "Good Shepherd Health Clinic of Muskogee, Inc" (Muskogee)

The clinic, a joint initiative of the St. Joseph Catholic Church and St. Paul United Methodist Church, provides health services to the poor who lack medical coverage in the Muskogee area. Last year the clinic served 528 patients, utilizing volunteer doctors, nurse practitioners, RNs, pharmacists, and vocational nurses. Providence Radiology & MRI Association and Muskogee Diagnostic Imaging provide clinic patients with imaging and x-ray services; local pharmacists partner with the clinic by offering prescription medicines at cost. The clinic also offers free dental services and legal consulting. Good Shepherd's goal is to improve clients' quality of life through an increase in health, self-esteem, and Christian support.

Texas

Scofield Memorial Church "Refugee Outreach Ministry" (Dallas)

In 2004, Scofield Memorial Church and the International Rescue Committee offered mentoring, tutoring, job training, and resettlement services to about 500 refugees. As part of the program, adult mentors from Scofield Memorial are trained by the IRC and matched with a refugee family to help them in the acculturation process. The program operates on a modest \$10,000 budget and engages an average of 40 volunteers each month. Sixty percent of the refugee students participating in the after-school tutoring program have increased their grades by at least one letter grade. Seventy-five percent of the mentored families become self-sufficient within 8 months.

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